



## Protecting Your Personal Information

### 1. Introduction

The privacy of information about an identifiable individual is an important value and is protected in law. EQUS REA LTD. (EQUS) is committed to respecting people's personal information – keeping it accurate, confidential and secure. EQUS' purpose is to provide safe and efficient electrical service to its members. To achieve that purpose it must collect, use and disclose certain personal information. This policy provides an overview of how EQUS treats personal information and complies with the law.

EQUS is committed to the 10 principles for privacy protection set by Canadian and world organizations – those principles are set out at the end of this policy. EQUS is committed to meeting its obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act*. A copy of the Act is available for reading at the EQUS office, and copies can be obtained from the Queen's Printer (telephone 780-427-4952, internet [www.qp.alberta.ca/](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/)).

EQUS has a Privacy Officer, who is responsible for providing information and support about privacy to members, staff, and the public, and compliance with the law. Any questions about this Privacy Code or our privacy practices can be directed to our Privacy Officer at Box 6199, Innisfail, AB T4G 1S8 or 1.888.211.4011.

Our employees play an important role in protecting personal information. They are required to adhere to this policy and take all reasonable steps to ensure that personal information is protected from unauthorized access.

### 2. Why personal information is collected.

EQUS operates as a membership organization, to provide safe and efficient electrical distribution service to its members. To do that, it collects certain personal information for the following purposes:

- to maintain our membership list;
- to keep its members in good standing;
- to communicate with its members;
- to elect the Board of Directors;
- to provide electrical services including installations, providing electricity, responding to incidents and emergencies, monitoring and billing consumption, maintaining and

upgrading the distribution system, reporting as required by law to government and its agencies, lobbying government; working with other electrical distribution companies whose systems are joined with EQUUS', obtaining services from contractors, detecting and preventing illegal activity, and planning for future services; and

- to collect outstanding accounts.

EQUUS uses the personal information it collects for those purposes only. It does not sell, share, or disclose the information for other reasons without your consent unless required or allowed by law.

### **3. Getting Consent.**

EQUUS tries to get clear written consent to collect, use and disclose personal information. EQUUS application forms, contracts, and other documents include written consent. Where it is reasonable to do so, consent may be accepted by telephone, verbally in the field or office, or through a 3rd party.

Sometimes the law allows consent to be implied, or does not require consent. Information collected by EQUUS prior to January 1 2004 has consent implied by law.

### **4. What personal information is collected?**

EQUUS collects only the information that it needs for its purposes. That includes the following:

- identification and contact information for members, co-owners of land, renters
- land locations and addresses, uses of land
- start and end dates of electrical service, installation and repair information, consumption records, and distribution access information
- financial and credit information about members and renters for billings, payments and collections
- medical and business information for service restoration priority
- consumer relationship information – requests for service, needs, feedback and preferences
- business relationship information – contract terms, advisors
- digitally recorded telephone communications for quality assurance and government compliance purposes

- employee information, to ensure strong and effective relationships with employees and respect their privacy rights

EQUS only collects personal information directly from individuals except when it has your consent to collect information from elsewhere or when permitted by law to collect it from a third party with or without consent.

## **5. Sharing or disclosing personal information**

EQUS only discloses personal information for the purposes set out above, unless required or allowed by law. EQUS may disclose personal information to the following third parties:

- to our third party service providers
- to a collection agency
- to a law enforcement agency to assist in an investigation
- emergency service providers
- to the Director or Minister pursuant to the *Rural Utilities Act*

If you want someone else to get information about you from EQUS, they may be asked to provide your consent. The law allows EQUS to disclose personal information in certain emergencies or to collect an outstanding account. The law sometimes requires EQUS to disclose personal information, for example, when required by a Court order.

## **6. Accuracy**

EQUS wants the personal information it holds to be accurate, so it can provide the best service. People have the right to inquire about their information and ensure it is accurate. EQUS encourages its members to keep their personal information up to date with the office – please notify us of any changes of name, address, telephone, or other information.

## **7. Access and correction**

If people have questions about the personal information EQUS has about them or how it has been used, they can make a request for access to the Privacy Officer. They can also request corrections of their information. EQUS will meet the legal requirements to provide access and correction in a timely and helpful way while protecting the privacy of others.

EQUS may charge individuals for out-of-pocket expenses for responding to an access request. If EQUS decides that a charge is appropriate, it will provide the individual with a written estimate prior to providing access.

## **8. Security**

To keep personal information secure, EQUUS uses physical measures such as locked cabinets and doors, and extensive computer security measures. It requires employees and contractors to protect confidentiality, and allows them access to personal information only if they need to know it to do their job. We only keep personal information for as long as is necessary for the purposes outlined above, or as long as required by law.

In some instances our third party service providers are based in the United States or elsewhere outside of Canada. The personal information which is disclosed to these service providers could be stored in the United States or elsewhere.

## **9. Openness**

EQUUS will make information about its privacy policy and procedures available to its members and employees. It will be responsive to questions and concerns.